

## THE INSTITUTE AND THE TEACHERS.

While I have considered it, in a sense, of first importance to instruct and arouse the people to the point of wishing and demanding better school facilities, I have endeavored to keep steadily in view the present and urgent necessities of the 1,335 teachers who have come under my instruction, who are now at work training for life about 75,000 North Carolina children. It has been my desire and ambition to be of real, practical aid to them, not to criticize them, or to ply them with methods of ideal excellence for which they are not prepared. As a condition precedent to doing them actual good, I have realized that I must know their conditions, their limitations, their environment, and must apply my instruction in the light of this knowledge. I have made it a point to know them personally, and to get as near them professionally as was possible. Let me say, in the first place, that I have never failed to find in any county some teachers seeking the light, earnest, thoughtful, effective, and, at times, showing rare and unexpected skill. Let me say further, that the entire force that I have met, as a rule, has been an eager, sober, receptive and prompt body of men and women, realizing more or less keenly their shortcomings and their responsibilities. Self-sufficiency and false pride does not distinguish them. On the contrary, a certain fine humility and patient questioning of theirs has so impressed me as to win my enduring sympathy and regard.

As may be seen from the table, the teachers are young people, their average age being twenty-six—males twenty-eight, females twenty-four. One seldom sees middle-aged folks, among the men at least. They largely belong to the extremes of life, youth and old age. Young men, farmer lads frequently; young girls, middle-aged women, old men, make up the force.

It has not been an inviting work in which to spend one's days of strength. During nine months of the year another sort of work must be done in order to live. In my circuit I found about one-fourth more men than women in the work.

In Cumberland, Richmond, Craven, Wayne, Beaufort, Lenoir and Pitt the women were largely in excess. In the two latter counties they were five to one. In Montgomery, Watauga, Ashe, Alleghany, Harnett and Carteret the men largely predominated. From careful estimates made in twelve representative counties, I estimate that twelve per cent. of the teachers spend six months of each year in the business of teaching, and about the same per cent. teach continuously in the same districts for three terms. From autobiographical sketches of their lives, written to me in nearly all the counties, I find that only a small fraction of the teachers have had the advantages of any ampler training than that afforded by the public schools, not then so efficient as now.

Teachers teach as they were taught. Hence, remote from one another,